

23 Individuals and Groups Will Receive the Governor's Outstanding Volunteer Awards on Oct. 24 in a Dover Ceremony

NEW CASTLE (Oct. 10, 2018) – Twenty-three individuals and groups will be honored with the 2018 Governor's Outstanding Volunteer Award on Oct. 24 at Dover Downs Hotel. The recipients will be recognized for significant contributions, engagement and impact in diverse activities, including mentoring children, supporting people with disabilities, protecting the environment, and assisting seniors, people who are homeless and veterans.

"Each day across our state, thousands of volunteers come together with the common purpose to make a difference in the lives of the people they serve," Governor John Carney said. "Those volunteers don't ask for anything in return, because they know in helping others, they enhance their own lives. We appreciate all those who volunteer their time and talents in Delaware, and it is my privilege to honor 23 individuals and groups with the 2018 Governor's Outstanding Volunteer Award."

"I am grateful for the generous spirit of volunteers across our state," said Dr. Kara Odom Walker, Cabinet Secretary for the Department of Health and Social Services. "The service they provide to vulnerable people and communities is invaluable, and it helps us recognize that government alone can't solve all of the challenges we face."

The Governor's Outstanding Volunteer Service Awards, administered by the State Office of Volunteerism, honors the

contributions of individuals and groups in Delaware that have made a positive impact in their communities or across the state through service and volunteering. The State Office of Volunteerism reports that 17,815 Delaware adults volunteered their time in 2017 through <https://volunteer.delaware.gov>, contributing more than 700,000 hours of service to nonprofits and community organizations. The value of their service is estimated at more than \$17.4 million.

“Volunteering not only helps others, it enhances our communities, leads to lifelong friendships, and creates a sense of belonging to a bigger purpose. The Governor’s Commission on Community and Volunteer Service is where opportunity, need and service intersect,” said Paul Calistro, Commission Chair. “Thank you for the tireless work of all the distinguished volunteers that make Delaware a great state.”

On Oct. 24, more than 325 people are expected to honor the volunteers for their outstanding service. The event at Dover Downs Hotel will begin with a reception at 5 p.m., followed by the ceremony starting at 6 p.m. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the award recipients and other attendees will celebrate with a dinner in honor of the 2018 Governor’s Outstanding Volunteers. The event is open to the public. Tickets are \$40 per person and are available online via Eventbrite: <https://2018governorsawards.eventbrite.com>. Information on the event and the recipients is available at <https://volunteer.delaware.gov>.

The Governor’s Outstanding Volunteer Service Awards are sponsored by the Office of the Governor, the Department of Health and Social Services, Division of State Service Centers, the State Office of Volunteerism, as well as the Governor’s Commission on Community and Volunteer Service.

The recipients of the 2018 Governors Outstanding Volunteer Service Awards are:

PAUL WILKINSON LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Ann Russell, Kent County

INDIVIDUAL WINNERS

New Castle County

Patricia Saunders, Community Service

Norman A. Abrams, Jr., Education/Literacy

Dee Durham, Environment

Marian Quinn, Environment

Chika Chukwuocha, Healthy Futures

Karen Tuohy, Human Needs

Jennifer Proebstle, Social Justice/Advocacy

Kent County

Beth Peterson, Health & Special Needs

Harriet Davies, Human Needs

Sussex County

Jason Bakke, Arts/Culture

Teresa Salinardo, Community Service

William F. Jiron, Jr., Veterans & Military Families

GROUP WINNERS

New Castle County

Newark Arts Alliance Volunteers, Arts/Culture

Delta Gamma Sorority, Education/Literacy

Christiana Care Health System Life History Volunteers, Health & Special Needs

PAWS for People Training Volunteers, Human Needs

Kent County

Central Delaware Habitat for Humanity Habitat Volunteers, Human Needs

Sussex County

Fort Miles Historical Association, Arts/Culture

Common Thread, Economic Development

MERR Institute Volunteers, Environment

First State Senior Companion Program Volunteers, Healthy Futures

American Legion Auxiliary Oak Orchard – Riverdale Unit 20, Veterans & Military Families

Mini-bios can be found below.

PAUL WILKINSON LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Ann B. Russell

For 33 years, Ann B. Russell has been mentoring and tutoring thousands of Delaware's most vulnerable population, children with exceptional needs. As a member of the Delaware Foster Grandparents Program since March 1985, Ann has spent 14,000 hours helping and teaching more than 2,000 students. One of the most impactful and memorable lessons that Ann teaches each year is a Veterans Day lesson: She dons her WWII uniform, complete with personal anecdotes and in-depth explanations of her various medals ribbons. Now 94 years old and chauffeured by her daughter, Ann still volunteers daily and will often spend her own money on special education projects for her charges.

INDIVIDUAL AWARD RECIPIENTS

Patricia Saunders – Community Service

For several years, Patricia Saunders has been a mainstay at Wilmington's Friendship House, a nonprofit, faith-based corporation in service to individuals and families who are or are at risk of becoming homeless. Patricia volunteers in all of the programs offered by Friendship House, including its day ministry, transitional housing, clothing bank, Sunday breakfast, winter sanctuary and Code Purple programs. Last year alone, she volunteered more than 750 hours, helping more than 100 people daily, just at Friendship House. The Episcopal Church of Saints Andrew & Matthew, also located in Wilmington, is another beneficiary of Patricia's compassionate volunteerism. She assists in the church's office, serves on

the altar guild and as a pastoral care minister, and provides weekly tutoring for students needing extra help in reading and math. Patricia also is a founder of the Fund for Women, an endowment held at the Delaware Community Foundation that gives grants to women's and girls' programs in Delaware each year.

Norman A. Abrams, Jr. – Education/Literacy

Norman A. Abrams, Jr. is deeply committed to education in Delaware. For the past 21 years, he has donated thousands of hours annually for the benefit of students, teachers, administrators and parents residing in the Appoquinimink School District, which serves the area of Bear, Middletown, Odessa and Townsend. Norman has planned and run meetings, ensured financial accountability, and assured accurate notes and record keeping, including communication with all groups and stakeholders. He has assisted with fundraisers, book fairs, vendor fairs, membership drives, and coordinated other volunteers for hundreds of events. In addition to the 138 hours he spent in 2017 in committee meetings alone, Norman has worked tirelessly to ensure students have books to read at school and at home, access to suitable playground equipment, and he built a school website to ensure better communication between parents and teachers.

Dee Durham – Environment

Dee Durham has been involved in conservation and environmental protection for decades as a professional and committed volunteer, focusing on plastic pollution for the past 10 years. Motivated by the trash we see along the roadways, beach and marine environments, Dee now targets the primary root cause by seeking to reduce the use of single-use plastics, less than 10 percent of which is reused or recycled. These plastics injure or cause death to thousands of marine animals, birds and even farm animals each year. Dee co-founded Plastic Free Delaware in 2010 and immediately began raising awareness through educational programming, group presentations and advocating for legislation. She annually has spent an

estimated 500 hours spearheading a variety of initiatives to raise consumer awareness of the waste of single-use plastic bags, balloons, plastic bottles and disposable straws.

Marian Quinn – Environment

Since 1996, Marian Quinn has filled nearly every role a volunteer can fill at Tri-State Bird Rescue and Research, which cares for ill, injured and orphaned wild birds. Originally, she started in the area of bird care and quickly proved herself to be adept at caring for even the most fragile species. She is now a member of the Oiled Wildlife “CORE” team of volunteers, which is highly trained in oil spill response and services and are the first volunteers contacted in the event of an oil spill. Marian also retrieves injured birds in northern Delaware and nearby Pennsylvania and then transports the birds to Tri-State for care. Beyond caring for the birds, Marian also helps train new volunteers, represents Tri-State in several outreach events annually, and provides education on how to make our world safer for wildlife. Over the past 22 years, Marian has logged thousands of miles, volunteered hundreds of hours and educated more than 1,000 people of all ages.

Chika Chukuwocha – Healthy Futures

Chika Chukuwocha is an avid and certified running coach with a running résumé that includes two marathons, many half-marathons and several “shorter” races of 10K and 5K. Two years ago, Chika combined her love of running with a desire to combat childhood obesity by helping children to stay active. Her passion for healthier futures, especially among children in her community, motivated her to become the founder and operator of a children’s free running program “I can do 26.2” in the city of Wilmington. “I Can Do 26.2” is an annual six-week running program designed for children ages 4 to 12, which promotes having fun, establishing healthy habits and adopting an active lifestyle for children through running. The children meet with volunteers two times a weeks and work on completing

five miles per session, either through walking, running or jogging – all at their own pace – with a goal of 26.2 miles or more at the end of the six weeks. In addition to helping more than 60 children learn to love running and being active, Chika spent more than 500 hours year-round collecting running shoes for the children to use, recruiting other volunteers, hosting an annual 5K run/walk fundraiser and performing countless other tasks.

Karen Tuohy – Human Needs

Karen Tuohy is one of Autism Delaware's most dedicated volunteers. As the mother of two adult children with autism, and as an educator at Heritage Elementary School in Wilmington, she is passionate about educating the public and improving the lives of individuals with autism and people with disabilities. Karen is Autism Delaware's "go-to" volunteer for community events and resource fairs, a loyal supporter of the annual Walk for Autism, assists with the Special Olympics swim team, and is a voice of experience for families trying to navigate through resources for a family member with a disability. For the past several years, Karen has been helping a young man who lives in a group home and whose own parents have passed away. With no family now, Karen ensures that this man is comfortable, taken care of and has the "little things" like gifts at Christmas. Beyond Autism Delaware, Karen is a volunteer and advocate for the entire Delaware disability community.

Jennifer Proebstle – Social Justice/Advocacy

Jennifer Proebstle, a University of Delaware student, has been an active volunteer and advocate for Planned Parenthood of Delaware (PPDE) in its education department, and also has served as a member and leader for Generation Action, PPDE's college advocacy group. During the past three years, she has spent more than 300 hours performing administrative duties, conducting research, aiding in marketing efforts and assisting with outreach. Her work in the education department helped

others be aware of the services PPDE offers, as well as ensuring access to accurate and comprehensive reproductive health information. As a leader of Generation Action, Jennifer participated in legislation efforts, assisted with fundraising, encouraged other volunteers and never hesitated to take on any extra work. Her passion and commitment to Planned Parenthood of Delaware has benefitted Delawareans statewide.

Beth Peterson – Health & Special Needs

For 14 years, Beth Peterson has led and directed a dedicated group of human and canine Pet Therapy volunteers at Bayhealth Medical Center. Pet therapy is a guided interaction between a patient and a trained animal supervised by the animal's handler. Countless medical studies have shown that pet therapy helps to control pain, reduce stress, provide comfort and diminish loneliness. In addition to overseeing the training and certification of all of the more than 30 teams that visit the Bayhealth system, Beth keeps track of all insurance documentation, shot renewal dates and visiting hours for each team. Beyond Bayhealth Medical Center, Beth and her dogs travel all across the state visiting patients from New Castle to the beaches, in close to 20 other medical facilities. Since 2004, starting with her beloved rescue dog Taco (who has since crossed the Rainbow Bridge) and now working with her canine partner, Jack, Beth has spent more than 1,600 hours visiting more than 28,000 patients, families and staff.

Harriet Davies – Human Needs

Harriet Davies began serving with Delaware Hospice in 2005, and her dedication has only grown – along with her passion and commitment – over the past 13 years. Not only supporting Delaware Hospice's patients in their homes and at the Delaware Hospice Center, she faithfully volunteers each year at the organization's children's bereavement camp, Camp New Hope. She also volunteers at several fundraising events and provides weekly clerical support. In 2017, Harriet recorded more than

480 hours for Delaware Hospice and there are hundreds of undocumented hours for volunteer service to Avenue Methodist Church in Milford, the Dover Symphony Orchestra, and the Rose Colored Lasses (which supports a number of other local charities including Home of the Brave for Women). In addition, Harriet also is a frequent participant in special fundraisers for local autism organizations.

Jason Bakke – Arts/Culture

Jason Bakke has been volunteering in one capacity or another since the age of 12 for the Zwaanendael Museum in Lewes, which commemorates Delaware's first European colony and is a showcase for the Lewes area's maritime, military and social history. Serving the museum as an educator and interpreter, a researcher, a program developer and a performer, Jason has been instrumental in assisting museum staff to expand its outreach beyond Lewes and further into Sussex County. His research for programming is tireless, and he even does some of that work from home without recording his hours. He acts as an educator at special events, runs stations ranging from colonial games to merchant displays, and explains exhibits and provides contextual information to guests. In 2017 alone, Jason volunteered more than 100 hours of service and helped the museum reach and provide education and entertainment to innumerable people.

Teresa Salinardo – Community Service

Teresa Salinardo has been serving her community in various capacities for more than 50 years. Currently, she volunteers at The Freeman Stage in Selbyville, and also donates her time and talents to Easterseals, the Christian Storehouse Thrift House, Catholic Charities and her local church. In addition, she has served as a foster parent to newborns until they are adopted. The word "dependable" is used repeatedly by each of the diverse organizations for which Teresa volunteers. Teresa approaches each day with positivity and a collaborative spirit and believes that "when you give of yourself, you get tenfold

back.” Although her volunteerism is diverse, each organization benefits from Teresa’s unwavering commitment to positively impact and improve the lives of those around her. In the past decade, Teresa has accumulated more than 2,000 hours of volunteerism and, in 2017 alone, recorded approximately 300 hours collectively for The Freeman Stage, Easterseals and the Christian Storehouse Thrift House.

William F Jiron, Jr. – Veterans & Military Families

As an Air Force retiree of 21 years and a former Washington Department of Defense contractor, William F. Jiron, Jr. has a personal and comprehensive understanding of the challenges that face veterans. In 2008, this knowledge led him to open the Veterans’ Awareness Center (VAC), located in Greenwood, with a mission to assist all Delaware veterans to achieve independence and self-sufficiency through access to information and services. For the past 10 years, William spent close to 2,000 hours annually working to fulfill this mission. The VAC provides resources for employment, educational benefits, emergency funding referrals and personalized self-help programs. In addition to founding the Veterans’ Awareness Center, William is also active in several other organizations focused on the needs and issues specific to veterans.

GROUP AWARD RECIPIENTS

Newark Arts Alliance Volunteers – Arts/Culture

Newark Arts Alliance Volunteers perform a wide range of activities that help build community through the arts. These include serving on the Board of Directors, standing committees, and as coordinators for free monthly programs. Volunteers staff the Newark Arts Alliance gallery and shop, lead art projects at community events, and assist instructors each summer at Camp Imagine. The volunteers plan and put on art-based events and fundraisers that provide opportunities for local artists and business while sustaining the financial well-being of the Newark Arts Alliance. In 2017 alone, the Newark Arts Alliance engaged more than 5,600 community members

and provided opportunities for almost 600 artists. With only two part-time paid staff, the Newark Arts Alliance is able to provide the impressive array of opportunities for artists and art lovers of all ages because of their dedicated volunteers and the almost 3,000 hours of service, time and talents contributed by those volunteers.

Delta Gamma Sorority – Education/Literacy

The Delta Gamma Sorority has provided several years of service to the Delaware Division for the Visually Impaired. The Delta Gamma sisters can be found at the Instruction Material Resource Center, where they produce large print books, re-catalog textbooks, type books for Braille transcription and label books for delivery to the Delaware Public School System. The sisters also administer consumer satisfaction surveys to ensure that the Delaware Division for the Visually Impaired is fulfilling its mission to empower people who are the blind or visually impaired in Delaware. In addition, the sorority also helps with agency-wide mailings, outreach events and summer camp recruitment with Camp Abilities, Delaware. The 92 Delta Gamma sisters spent more than 500 hours in 2017 providing services daily that directly benefit people who are blind or visually impaired, supported by the Delaware Division for the Visually Impaired. In 2017, the Delta Gamma Sorority assisted more than 300 school children in Delaware who are blind or visually impaired and more than 600 adults who are visually impaired in the state.

Christiana Care Health System Life History Volunteers – Health & Special Needs

Since October 2012, Christiana Care Health System volunteers have been interviewing patients and writing their non-medical stories to build a bridge between the patients and staff, allowing staff to deliver care in the context of the whole person. Once a patient is identified by staff, the volunteer will meet face-to-face with the patient for an interview, write the story and then work with the patient to make edits

as needed. The final story is presented to the staff and patient, enhancing and redefining their communication during the patient's stay. The increased patient-centered communication allows for increased compliance to treatment plans and patient satisfaction leading to better overall health outcomes. During therapy, staff use the stories to better connect with patients and will send stories along to other facilities when patients are transferred. To date, more than 526 life histories have been completed, with 34 in 2017 alone.

PAWS for People Training Volunteers – Human Needs

PAWS for People Delaware is a nonprofit organization committed to providing therapeutic visits to any person in the community who would benefit from interaction with a well-trained, loving pet. To become a team for PAWS, both the human and pet must become certified through a rigorous training program. The training volunteers make PAWS sustainable – sharing their time and utilizing their valuable experience and expertise to fill critical needs. Residing in all three Delaware counties, the 52 training volunteers welcome new applicants, conduct orientation and basic training, certification and also provide ongoing support and mentorship. Through the efforts of their training volunteers, PAWS is able to provide more varied programs and therapeutic benefits to help people of all ages. PAWS pet-therapy team visits are so much more than time with a pet, they are about making individualized connections, providing scientifically proven health benefits that include sharing compassion, support, encouragement and joy.

Central Delaware Habitat for Humanity Habitat Heroes – Human Needs

Central Delaware Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build affordable homes, communities and hope. Habitat Heroes, most of whom are in retirement, have mostly responsible for building more than 40 homes since 2009. The volunteer Habitat Heroes participate in all aspects of

residential construction including framing, flooring, drywall, painting, siding, trim, roofing, finishing, landscaping, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, masonry, insulation, window and door installation, and trim. Volunteers also operate and staff numerous power tools and other heavy equipment. In 2017, the 10 volunteer Habitat Heroes served a combined 3,000 hours. This year, Central Delaware Habitat for Humanity, with the help of volunteers, is building 15 homes, with an emphasis on the downtown development district of central Dover. Many of these home are being erected in blighted communities, making an immediate impact on community revitalization.

Fort Miles Historical Association – Arts/Culture

In 2003, the Fort Miles Historical Association was founded to work with Delaware State Parks and in particular, Cape Henlopen State Park, to develop the potential of Fort Miles, one of American's coastal defense fortifications, located within Cape Henlopen State Park. In 15 years, the Fort Miles Museum volunteer group has grown from four to nearly 400 volunteer members who work within several layers of volunteerism, all focused on sharing the rich history of Delaware's role in coastal defense. Volunteers are asked to speak about the museum at local civic, library, VFW and other meetings to help educate the public and speak about topics ranging from Pearl Harbor to the German prisoners in the United States. Volunteers are also involved in historically accurate restoration efforts, participate in community events promoting the museum, and offer volunteer opportunities to other community groups such as the Boy Scouts and church groups.

Common Thread – Economic Development

Common Thread is a group of 10 women from Eagle's Nest Church in Milton who devote their sewing talents to providing new Sussex County Habitat for Humanity homeowners and families with baskets of hand-sewn and quilted items for their homes. At each Habitat house dedication, a Common Thread member

presents the family with these much-needed items to welcome them home. Since its founding in 2015, Common Thread has served more than 40 Habitat for Humanity families in Sussex County. Over the past year, 14 new homeowners were presented with gifts that included quilts, bedroom and bathroom window valences, pillowcases, children's laundry bags and placemats. Before choosing items to create their gift baskets, the Common Thread volunteers learn about each Habitat partner family to better understand their personal needs. The team takes great pains to choose fabrics that include family members' favorite colors, theme and materials.

MERR Institute Volunteers – Environment

The Marine Education, Research & Rehabilitation Institute, Inc. (MERR) is a public, nonprofit volunteer-based organization that acts as the official respondents for marine mammals and sea turtles that strand in Delaware. Comprised of one paid staff person and 400 trained volunteers, MERR operates throughout Delaware and, in 2017, responded to 232 stranded marine animals. MERR's volunteers are a diverse group of people with a myriad of backgrounds and experiences, which they bring to the organization as they respond to stranded whales, porpoises, seals, manatees and sea turtles. These 420 dedicated MERR volunteers are school children and seniors, retirees and local business people, naturalists, fishermen, students and teachers. Through the efforts of MERR and their trained volunteers, MERR saves the state of Delaware more than \$450,000 annually.

First State Senior Companion Program Volunteers – Healthy Futures

First State Senior Companion Program has been in existence for more than 37 years. Senior Companions, ages 55 and up, provide assistance and friendship to older adults who have difficulty with daily living tasks, such as shopping or paying bills. The Senior Companions help these adults remain independent in their homes and in their community instead of having to move

to more costly institutional care. Senior Companions also offset the responsibilities that typically fall on family members or professional caregivers. The First State Senior Companions provide personal care, nutrition, social care, home management, information and advocacy, respite and transportation throughout the state of Delaware. In 2017, 67 First State Senior Companion Program volunteers served 138 clients and volunteered more than 75,000 hours, saving Delawareans \$1.7 million for in-home, non-medical care fees. More than 90 percent of clients reported that they increased social ties and social support by way of their Senior Companions.

American Legion Auxiliary Oak Orchard – Riverdale Unit 20 – Veterans & Military Families

The Mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to serve veterans, the military and military families, and to support the community. Ultimately, the American Legion Auxiliary enriches the quality of life for those they serve and their members, by promoting a commitment to the founding principles of justice, freedom, democracy and loyalty. In 2017, the American Legion Auxiliary Oak Orchard – Riverdale Unit 20 recorded more than 20,000 hours of volunteer service across dozens of different programs, benefiting hundreds of veterans, military and their families and community residents. Among the aid provided was an annual patriotism essay contest for students, several fundraisers for various causes, blood drives, flu shot clinics, school book fairs, academic scholarships for graduating high school students, ice cream socials for veterans at local nursing homes and working with Wreaths Across America to provide wreaths at the Delaware Veterans Cemetery in Millsboro.